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THE CHRISTIAN "BRAVE;"

OR, SOME

REMARKABLE PASSAGES

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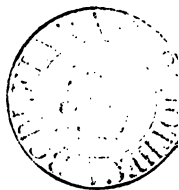
THE LIFE OF MR. A. ROBERTS,

OF CONNECTICUT, U.S.,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF FAITH, CHARITY, AND SELF-DENIAL.

EDITED BY

THE REV. T. SEAVILL.



"THIS MAN ALSO HAD SAID TO HIMSELF, NOT IN MERE CATECHISM WORDS, BUT WITH ALL HIS INSTINCTS, AND THE QUESTION THRILLED IN EVERY NERVE OF HIM, AND PULSED IN EVERY DROP OF HIS BLOOD, 'WHAT IS THE CHIEF END OF MAN? BEHOLD, I TOO WOULD LIVE AND WORK AS BESEEMS A DENIZEN OF THIS UNIVERSE, A CHILD OF THE HIGHEST GOD. BY WHAT MEANS IS A NOBLE LIFE STILL POSSIBLE FOR ME HERE? YE HEAVENS, AND THOU EARTH, OH, HOW?'"

LONDON:

ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1865.

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THE CHRISTIAN "BRAVE."

CHAPTER I.

A LONDON minister, whilst preaching to his people on a Sabbath morning in the autumn of 1851, saw before him a man of singular appearance. He was exceedingly tall, and rather stooping; his clothes were cut after an antique pattern, and consisted of home-spun cloth of snuff-brown colour. He wore no neckcloth, but had the collar of his woollen shirt buttoned closely round his neck. His hat was broad-brimmed, and but for the collar of his coat, he might have been regarded as a "ministering friend" from a remote provincial district.

When the service was over, the stranger came forward to speak to the preacher. The countenance of the man correctly expressed his character. His soft liquid eyes, and a voice of uncommon sweetness, gave utterance to a heart full of love and tenderness. The quiet fraternal grasp of his large hand, accompanied

by the child-like gentle tones of the stranger's greeting, made the minister feel that he was in the presence of no ordinary character—of one of nature's nobles, though in humble attire.

In the conversation that ensued, it soon became evident that he was a man of genuine apostolic spirit. He was a descendant of the Puritan Fathers of the New England States, and having inherited their heroic temper, he had devoted himself to a useful and adventurous career on behalf of suffering humanity. A great portion of his life had been spent in distant parts of the globe. He had travelled over a large portion of the North American continent on an enterprise of mercy. Like the earliest pioneers of Christianity, he had gone forth "without purse or scrip," trusting simply to a Divine helper, accepting the hospitality of friends, and working at the roughest manual occupation to sustain himself.

He stated that his object in coming to this country was to find the means of proceeding to ROME, on behalf of whose abject population he felt a warm compassion, prompting him to endeavour, were it possible, to shed on their benighted minds some rays, however feeble, of the light of heaven.

The minister heard with interest the words of the stranger, whom he already began to regard as a brother; and although no letters of

introduction were presented, it was felt that it would be quite safe to love and trust him. Remembering the apostolic injunction, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares," means were found to provide for the wants of our friend. He was set to work to visit the poor of the locality, and after a while he became an inmate of the minister's family. Meanwhile the following communication respecting him had been received from Dr. Brigham, of New York:—

BIBLE HOUSE, NEW YORK,
January 16, 1852.

REV. and DEAR SIR,

Your note of the 16th ult., in relation to Mr. A. Roberts is received. I remember the man well, and have often heard of his labours among the poor of Panama. My opinion is that he is just what he appears to be—a plain, honest man, with humane feelings, rather winning, without ambition or method. I have heard so many speak of him in the way above indicated, without a whisper of any moral defect, that I should be disposed to set him at work if a door opened.

Yours, with Christian salutation,
J. C. BRIGHAM.

While residing in the house of the minister, Mr. Roberts would not eat the bread of idle-

ness. Every day from early morn to night-fall he was engaged in works of mercy. He became an efficient helper, not as a preacher, but as a visitor of the garret-home and of the sick. Wherever he could discover human misery he delighted to pour the consolations of the Gospel. By the wayside he loved to scatter the good seed; he would address himself to groups of street-loiterers, and by words of kindness or the offered tract, he would often conciliate and subdue the most rugged natures. He was unremitting in attending the schools, where his genial countenance and pleasant voice made him a favourite with the children.

In the cause of temperance he showed great zeal, and was always labouring earnestly to induce others to follow his example in the practice of total abstinence.

The minister's home circle felt the charm of Mr. Roberts's quiet uniform excellence. Without wit, humour, or those brilliant conversational powers which render some men distinguished, our brother, by his active goodness alone, won the respect and love of all. It is not intended to represent him faultless; nevertheless it is a fact that, during the period he remained with the minister's family, extending over several months, they saw in him nothing to blame, save a rigorous self-denial which sometimes appeared excessive. The following

pages will show how completely he had been enabled to bring his natural desires and tastes into subjection to the higher laws of his spiritual nature. Early in life he had accustomed himself to endure hardness, and therefore all kinds of privation became familiar to him. Fasting, with prayer, was a delight. One Christmas-day he was missed till the evening, when it appeared that, in his visits among the working-classes that morning, he had seen so much that appeared to him an excessive animal indulgence, that he retired to his chamber disgusted, and spent the rest of the day in acts of devotion, with only bread and water.

But he had made greater sacrifices than this, in the surrender of the gentle charities of home—choosing a solitary life, making himself of no reputation, and going forth as a pilgrim among the nations; that, after the example of the good Samaritan, he might minister to the wants of the poorest and most wretched, for whom no man cared.

His motives were transparent. Love to God and kindness towards his fellow-men were the ruling principles of his conduct. Earthly rewards had no attraction for him. He evidently found a recompense in the work itself. Thus losing his life for Christ's sake, he indeed found it; while the issues of his labour, reaching onwards to eternity, seemed to occupy the

entire field of his vision. Every day in all his engagements he was apparently looking, not at "the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Therefore he thought but little of risking his life amid the terrific dangers of his enterprising career. "For him to live was Christ, and to die was gain." One day, when conversing with him on the subject of death, his countenance brightened, and he exclaimed, referring to the period of his own departure, "Ah ! that would be the happiest day of my life."

When the state of the weather prevented his work of visitation, he would often beguile the hours by relating the incidents of his eventful life, which are given in the succeeding pages. Sometimes he would sing to the children the following hymn, which he had brought from his native land.

A HOME IN HEAVEN.

A Home in Heaven ! what a joyful thought,
As the poor man toils in his weary lot,
His heart opprest, and with anguish driven
From his home below to his Home in Heaven.

A Home in Heaven ! as the sufferer lies,
On his bed of pain, and uplifts his eyes
To that bright home, what a joy is given
With the blessed thought of his Home in Heaven.

A Home in Heaven! when our pleasures fade,
And our wealth and fame in the dust are laid,
And strength decays and our health is riven,
We are happy still with our Home in Heaven.

A Home in Heaven! when the faint heart bleeds,
By the Spirit's stroke for its evil deeds;
Oh! then what bliss in that heart forgiven,
Does the hope inspire of a Home in Heaven.

A Home in Heaven! when our friends are fled
To the cheerless gloom of the mouldering dead,
We wait in hope on the promise given,
We shall meet up there in our Home in Heaven.

A Home in Heaven! when the wheel is broke,
And the golden bowl by the terror stroke,
When life's bright sun sinks in death's dark even,
We shall then go up to our Home in Heaven.

Our Home in Heaven! oh! the glorious home,
And the Spirit joined with the Bride says "come;"
Come, seek His face, and your sins forgiven,
And rejoice in hope of your Home in Heaven.

CHAPTER II.

MR. ALFRED ROBERTS was born at New Haven, Connecticut, in the year 1809. His parents were in humble circumstances, and often struggled with difficulties, through sickness and the cares of a family of nine children. In the hope of improving their condition they removed to Massachusetts, and purchased a small farm, when their son Alfred was seven years old. But illness again overtook the father, and prostrated his energies, so that the son, though living in a land of schools, enjoyed but very few educational advantages, and was obliged to work at manual labour when he was only twelve years of age. To withhold from a child the blessings of education, and expose his tender frame to the severities of physical toil, thus inflicting lasting injury both on the body and the mind, can never be justified but by the direst necessity, such as apparently existed in the case before us.

Even at this early age the sterling qualities that distinguished our friend in after days began to appear. The following sentences from his own lips, respecting this period of his

life, display the germs of the benevolence, the love of active exertion, and the self-reliance which at length became leading features of his character. "I delighted in working on the farm, and *to take care of my father and mother.* I raked and set up half an acre of rye a day, for six days following. I raised four acres of Indian corn and a large quantity of potatoes the same year, having the whole care of the farm for one season, and working quite alone."

How pleasant a picture of self-denying filial affection is here presented. Alas, that it should be so rarely seen in families. And yet what duty has attached to it the promise of a richer recompense? As youth is the seed-time of life, a child's treatment of his parents is often prophetic of his future career. Many a criminal at the gallows has confessed that his crimes began in filial disobedience; and many a saint has attributed the happiness and usefulness of his life to the early-formed habit of listening to a father's counsel, or yielding to a mother's guidance. So it was in the experience of Mr. Roberts. In the morning of his life we see him affectionately caring for his parents, and he afterwards prospered in the possession of the "true riches" and abiding honour.

When he was about fourteen years of age his father bought a farm in the State of New

York. It being a new country, he was again required to assist in clearing the ground and sustaining the family.

It was at this period that a very important event took place, which must have exercised considerable influence upon the whole household. The father and mother became decided followers of Christ, and made a profession of religion in a Congregational church. The subject of our narrative, with his brothers and sisters, was baptized. The family had always been of exemplary morals. The Sabbath was strictly kept. The children were not allowed their usual sports, but were kept indoors if unable to get to the house of God.

We are now approaching the grand crisis in the life of our friend, when his soul became the Temple of the Spirit. But before this auspicious event occurred his morals were blameless. He was remarkable for habits of industry, and especially for efforts to promote the comfort and well-being of his father and mother. In his own words he tells us—

"I loved my parents, and delighted in the farm. My chief wish was to get money and make a provision for my father. I was anxious for this world's good. I loved my home, and preferred it to the company of young men of my own age, who laughed at me for not joining in their pleasures. In this way I continued

with my father, having assisted my brothers in clearing the ground, building a good house, and making my parents comfortable, and I paid off all debts."

When he was twenty-three years old he endured a severe sickness, which confined him to his bed five years. During this affliction, he was for a long season speechless, and not able even to lift himself. When his sickness began his mind was very unhappy. For a year and a half he had been convinced of sin, and saw his appalling danger as an heir of Divine wrath. The death of a friend had so deeply affected him as to put a stop to all his worldly pleasures. Yet instead of going in his distress to the Saviour, he resisted Him, and would not listen to His voice. In the hope of diverting his thoughts, he had entered more fully than ever into his daily employment, and remained a stranger to spiritual comfort. For three months before his illness, his mind became increasingly miserable, till at length he gave himself up to despair, thinking "that there was no mercy for him." While in this forlorn state he imagined one night, in a dream, that he saw his lately deceased friend, who told him, as a messenger from the Invisible, "that he was a lost man!" At the time he himself "believed the lie, and went about his ordinary business with the deliberate intention

(as he expressed it) of doing the best he could in this world, and then to die and go to hell without anyone knowing it." In this hour of darkness he shrank within himself, and refused to reveal his feelings to anyone. He would not even tell his dream, as "he thought that none could help him, as he was lost, and the laugh of the wicked might be raised against him if they knew his fears." He was tempted to entertain the delusive notion that he might obtain quietude of spirit if he ceased to struggle, and resigned himself wholly to despair. He tried to follow this Satanic counsel, but still his deadly misery remained uncured. Sometimes, like a prisoner in his lonely cell, pining after liberty and home, he would think of the joys of heaven, and, longing to be there, yet oppressed by the burden of his sins, he would venture to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Then, again, his conscience would tell him that "Heaven was no place for him." He was, at the same time, aware that a powerful and subtle enemy had access to his most secret thoughts, and was ever trying to draw them away from God and Heaven. Although a total abstainer, he was strongly tempted to the sin of drunkenness, on the plea of diverting his mind from self-destruction, which frequently appeared as the only complete relief of his great distress. Happily, however, this tempta-

tion being resisted, after a time it ceased to distress him. But now bodily infirmity was added to his mental suffering, and perhaps was in part caused by it. This illness continued with increasing severity for six weeks, when his physicians and friends, after trying their utmost skill, were obliged to give him up as past recovery. His mother and sisters watched his bed day and night with great anxiety, as they feared he was about to quit the world unreconciled to God. He himself regarded death as inevitable, and saw approaching the black shores of eternity haunted by fiends mocking his impending fate! Happily, however, deliverance came. When the poor sufferer, in the extremity of his anguish, regarded his condition as desperate, and thought that even if he once more prayed, he could not add to his misery, he said to himself, "I will go to Christ, and if I perish, I will perish at the foot of the cross." Then, immediately as the eye of faith rested on the person and cross of Immanuel, the thick mists of the long dismal night gave place to a heavenly brightness, as of "a morning without clouds." "He gave up everything to Christ," and in return was made partaker of the glorious hope of eternal life. His misery was exchanged for rapture, as he communed with the Saviour. As he lay on his sick bed, his fellowship with the Unseen

was sometimes so intimate that "it seemed," he said, "as though he held Christ in his arms." Now he no longer dreaded to converse with Christians. He had pleasure in telling them his sad experience, which had well-nigh driven him to desperation, and how at length he had discovered the secret of "Perfect peace" in the love and friendship of the risen Christ. These were the happiest days he had ever known. Now, being "in Christ, he was a new creature; old things had passed away, and all things had become new." The Book of God, which before had been "dark to him, and like a sealed book," he now understood and read with pleasure.

Several months had passed, and he was still on the bed of languishing, when a religious meeting was held in the neighbourhood, and amongst the "inquirers" there was a weak-minded girl. Universalists and other opposers of the truth, made great sport of her and the meeting. But Mr. Roberts heard a matron say, "That girl may yet do much good in the world, for 'God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.'" "These words," said he, "were applied by the Spirit, and went to my heart"—the effect remaining several days. It seemed to him "like an arrow from the Almighty;" *his mind* was much exercised respecting it,

thinking it might be a call for him to work for God. Yet he considered that he wanted health, talents, and education, and therefore he was at a loss to know what to do. Still, he resolved on this, "I can, with the help of God, be a Christian. I can live a holy life, and deny myself. May God direct me."

On the recovery of his health, he made a public profession of his attachment to the Saviour; but he declined joining any church, from the mistaken idea that he would thereby sanction sectarianism; and also because of some professors who showed, as he thought, a strong regard for the world's fashions, and placed too much reliance on the orthodoxy of their creed. On leaving his sick chamber for the scenes of active life, "God seemed to convert him afresh," he said, "and to show him that he ought to let go the creeds and fashions of the world, and be content to call himself a CHRISTIAN, making his Bible his only directory, and living as a light and example." He resolved, therefore, to devote all he had, both soul and body, to the Lord. "He was ready," he said, "to give up his parents and farm,—brothers and sisters, to be guided by the Spirit into whatever path He might open before him." Accordingly, he at once laid aside his "fashionable clothing," and was content to put on only "what was necessary and convenient."

CHAPTER III.

MR. ROBERTS, having thus begun to deny himself and to follow Christ, was not long in discovering the means of being useful to his fellow-men. In the populous neighbourhood of his residence, "being," as he said, "anxious to do some good," he began to establish Sunday Schools in the most destitute parts; furnishing them with libraries, either by loans from other schools, or by collecting money for the purpose. Having succeeded in this undertaking, his mind was led to consider the claims of perishing men in more remote districts. He especially "felt a desire to go among the outcasts for whom no man cared, to try to do them good." After much reflection, he lighted on one of the most original and least attractive schemes of benevolence that perhaps ever entered the human mind.

At a distance of twenty miles there was a large workhouse, whose inmates were much neglected. He found their condition deplorable. There was no Sunday school,—no regular instruction of any kind. He applied to

some neighbouring ministers, who promised their help, but they afterwards failed in their endeavours. On hearing this, "he made up his mind to become himself an inmate of the house, that he might know correctly the existing evils, and find out a remedy." He went to the authorities of the town, stated his request, and received a pauper's order for admission. On his arrival at the workhouse he became one of its inmates, sharing their ordinary fare, and submitting to their accustomed privations. Thus did this devoted servant of Christ, in the prime of life, renounce the comforts and conveniences of home, and consort with the lowest society, under most repulsive circumstances, in the fulfilment of what he believed was his duty. Choosing for himself a sphere of labour remote from the eye of the world, and feeling alike indifferent to its ridicule or applause, he was content with the inward witness that what he did was pleasing to God and likely to benefit the degraded beings around him. The task to which he now addressed himself was rendered more difficult by the renewed loss of his health, so that for several weeks he was incapable of labour. But a glance at the society around him was sufficient to convince him of the urgent necessity of attempting something on their behalf immediately, and he "resolved therefore to

begin, even if he should die in the house." The inmates, regarding him as one like themselves, naturally imagined that he had come there "just to get a living in consequence of a bad character." Most of them had been brought there through intemperance. Only a few had entered from misfortune. Such was the society in which our friend ate and drank and passed most of his time. He soon began, as he had opportunity, to speak on the subject of religion, to read the Bible aloud, and other suitable books. This course of action produced universal astonishment. They all, with one accord, said that "that was no place for religion; that it could not be enjoyed or practised there, the place was so bad." But he, undaunted, still continued his course quietly, and soon gathered around him most of the children for instruction. Shortly after several adults were drawn to listen, and, as their number increased, he spoke to them about the love and compassion of the Saviour. More than three weeks passed before any signs of yielding appeared on the part of those whom he addressed. There was a man in the company more notoriously wicked than the rest. On one occasion, after the Bible had been read in his presence, he exclaimed, "Mr. Roberts, you appear to be a religious man, why don't you pray with us?" Supposing him to be jesting, as usual,

he was reproved, but he soon afforded unmistakeable evidence that he was in earnest. Prayer was then offered. All present were soon hushed into silence, and one after another shewed signs of interest and attention. After this, preachers came in to speak to the people. Several backsliders were restored, and seemed to renew their enjoyment of religion. One man, seventy years of age, who had been a great drunkard, became concerned about his soul. He was heard to pray at midnight, and had a great desire to read. Such was his diligence in learning that he was able in a fortnight to read his Bible. The teacher said he never had a more willing and interesting scholar than that old man. A woman, also, of unenviable reputation as "a great scold, and very unhappy," ceased her scolding and became quiet and thoughtful, so that it was remarked, "how much religion had done for her!"

Mr. Roberts spent six weeks in the work-house, engaged in these self-denying labours. He worked with his hands, that he might not be a burden to the State. Money was offered him for his work, which he refused to take, to the surprise of the superintendent, who, though himself no friend to religion, "gave him credit," he said, "for being the first honest pauper he had met with." On leaving the house, Mr. Roberts visited several adjacent

towns, and called on the ministers of different denominations in order to excite their sympathy on behalf of the paupers he had left behind, and was so far successful, that when he visited the locality after five years' absence, he was gratified to find that the Sunday school prospered, and that the moral condition of the inmates generally had greatly improved.

His experience while making these exertions for the benefit of the most wretched of his fellow-men, instead of producing discouragement, only served to energize his spirit to attempt fresh efforts in a similar direction. At length he determined to live with the poor altogether,—to be as one of them, and to make his home among them for the rest of his days; thus giving the fullest effect in his power to the precept of the apostle, "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." By pursuing this unusual course, he hoped to avoid the entanglements which worldly connections and possessions too often present even to the renewed mind, and to win more readily the attention and confidence of the poorest members of society whom he sought to save. His friends and acquaintance urged the most pressing reasons to dissuade him from this course, which they regarded as absurd and fanatical. But his resolution remained unshaken, and without delay he reduced it to

practice by visiting one workhouse after another. He, however, found himself much hindered in this good work through not being permitted to remain long enough with the inmates. He was rarely allowed to stay more than a single night, so that his opportunities of intercourse were very limited. Being discouraged at this, after a while he resolved to devote himself to a new field of exertion; and, still keeping in view the spiritual wants of the most neglected, he turned his face westward, that he might pursue his labours of love among the Indians.

He left New York in 1840, and spent five months in Ohio, but he could not remain inactive. During the greater part of this time he kept a Day school in a destitute neighbourhood; he also assisted in a Sunday school, and visited from house to house. While thus engaged a fever seized him, which confined him to his bed for three weeks. An ague followed, and its painful effects clung to him for a year or two, yet he did not return home, but still bent his way westward, and entered the State of Indiana, where he opened another school for three months. By this means he sought to do good while he supplied his personal necessities. Yet he could not stay long in one place; an invisible hand seemed to beckon him on towards the lands of the hea-

then. He therefore renewed his journey, and went into the State of Illinois, where he set up another school, and frequently distributed Testaments and Tracts, with which he had filled his knapsack on leaving home,—taking as few clothes as possible. Still going towards the west, in the autumn he crossed the Mississippi and entered Missouri, passing through the State to the western frontier, where he was occupied with another school during the winter. In Andrew county, at Nodaway town (so called because it stands on a river of that name), he met with a most quiet, moral, and religious people. The school there "was, without exception," he said, "the best he had ever visited," and the young people generally were industrious and well-behaved.

During the journey of 1,300 miles he had met with very few slaveholders till he entered this locality. There he found several,—the slaves, however, were well treated. Mr. Roberts did his utmost to get the blacks into the Sunday school, but was unsuccessful. Still he had the satisfaction to know that through his influence more attention was paid to them in their own homes. He left this people unwillingly, as, during his stay among them; he had seen religion revive, besides a general waking up to the importance of temperance and of education. In reply to their pressing invita-

tion that he should remain, he said that "the place was too good for him, he must go where the people were in a worse condition." His mind was evidently bent on going to the red men of the west, to tell them of Him who had "come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Some incidents that took place in his journey to the Pawnee country are described in the next chapter, by another friend to whom Mr. Roberts related them.

CHAPTER IV.

IN the spring of 1842, a party of American traders were pursuing their long and toilsome journey towards the country occupied by the Pawnee Indians, carrying with them the wares required in the barter traffic, by which the spoils of the chase, and the various specimens of Indian handicraft, find their way into the markets of the civilized world. The party consisted of two principal traders, with their attendants and helpers, mustering altogether a company of about sixty persons. Pushing onwards, from the State of Missouri, toward the far West, they had entered those wild regions over which the red men still wander as undisputed possessors of the soil. Though rivals in their calling, the two traders had united their forces for the purpose of mutual defence, and had long since passed the boundary beyond which they ceased to expect any traces of the white man's presence. To their surprise, however, they were overtaken, a few days after they had entered the Indian territory, by a stranger, who requested permission to join their

party. He stated that he was an American, from one of the New England States; that his mind had been deeply interested in the condition of the native tribes, and his sympathies drawn out towards his red brethren of the West; that he was on his way to the settlement of the Pawnee Indians, amongst whom he intended to take up his residence, believing that God would make him useful, as an instrument in proclaiming amongst them the unsearchable riches of Christ. He was not a missionary, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, being entirely unconnected with any organised association, but acting under a strong impulse of individual duty. He was a poor man, but in the true apostolic spirit he had set out from his native State, without purse or scrip, and had travelled the whole distance, 1700 miles, on foot. He reached one of the frontier settlements of the State of Missouri, a day or two after the traders' party had started for the Pawnee country; but being told that by hard travelling he might probably overtake them, he had followed their tracks, and now solicited permission to join their company, and journey with them. This was frankly and cordially given, and the rough hospitality of the camp was readily extended to him. In this way they travelled many days, towards the banks of the Platte river, on which many of the Pawnee villages are situated, and

much interesting and valuable information did the stranger (Mr. Roberts) obtain from the traders, respecting the habits and disposition of the Indians amongst whom he intended to settle. He remonstrated earnestly with them respecting the practice of carrying ardent spirits amongst the red men; and they acknowledged the dreadful havoc which the fire-water had made amongst them, but pleaded the usages of the trade, and that if they refused to supply the Indians with liquor, their rivals would carry off their trade. It happened, that whilst debating this question, they were met by two individuals, sent as a deputation from one of the missionary stations, to urge upon the traders the importance of abandoning this traffic; and, their efforts being vigorously seconded by the new district governor, Mr. Roberts had the satisfaction, before he left the country, to witness the entire suppression of the sale of liquors, and the Indians thus delivered from one of the strongest incentives to vice, and from the greatest obstacle to their social and spiritual improvement.

Having reached the Pawnee villages, Mr. Roberts explained to the Indians the object with which he came amongst them; he asked no payment for his services, but simply requested permission to reside amongst them, working as they did, and gaining a subsistence

by tilling a plot of ground. It was some time before they could understand what he really intended to do, or appreciate the motives which guided him; he was looked upon with great jealousy and suspicion, and underwent extreme hardships and privation in adapting himself to his new mode of life. He laboured, however, diligently and successfully, seeking every opportunity to cultivate their affection and confidence; he nursed the sick, assisted the feeble, taught the children, and endeavoured to unfold the truths of Christianity to the benighted minds around him. Gentle, meek, and patient, he gradually obtained an influence on all around him—the law of love triumphed over the roughest natures, and the red men learned the value of that friendship which could endure such hardness, without any other reward than the gratification of contributing to their welfare. On one point, however, he offended one of their strongest prejudices, and incurred the displeasure and contempt of the whole tribe. He refused to fight! The Pawnees were subjected to continual alarms of incursion and attack from the Sioux, a fierce tribe, whose country lies to the westward of the Pawnee territory; and when these alarms arose, the chiefs would apply to their white brother, to assist them in defending their village, but his reply was, "I am a Christian, and

I cannot fight ; my religion teaches me to love my enemies, and to return good for evil—I love the Sioux, as well as the Pawnees, and my object is to try to teach you this religion of love." He endeavoured to show them, that these miserable and protracted wars were fast destroying the red men from the face of the earth, and that their sufferings and privations were chiefly caused by the perpetual feuds in which they were engaged ; and in which, frequently, their crops were destroyed, and their villages burned. These, however, were doctrines which the Indians were slow to receive. They charged poor Roberts as a coward, because he would not fight, and they gave him the most humiliating title that Indian contempt can fasten on a man. They called him "*a woman.*" At length, however, an attack by the Sioux really took place—their war parties scoured the country, and the village in which Mr. Roberts resided was threatened with a visit from a band of the marauders. The Pawnees were in the utmost consternation. The warriors mustered their forces, and prepared for a bloody conflict. The women and children, together with the aged and infirm, were hurried away into places of concealment. In the midst of the general terror and confusion, one individual was seen to issue from his hut, his spade thrown carelessly over his shoulder, as he walked quietly

off to his little field, to pursue his usual occupation. He was stopped by some of the chiefs, who inquired if their white brother did not know that the Sioux were upon them—that they would kill and scalp all whom they could find; if he would not fight, surely he would hide with the rest? With a quiet smile, Mr. Roberts replied that he did not fear the Sioux, though he could not fight them. He was not their enemy, and if they came, he was in the hands of One who could rule the hearts of the Sioux, and restrain their hands from doing him any harm. The chiefs looked into his face, but they saw no token of fear—they felt themselves in the presence of a courage superior to their own, and from that hour they ceased to despise the Pale-face, who would not fight. They no longer called him "*woman*," but they hailed him, ever after, by the most honourable of all Indian titles. He was called "*The Brave*."

The Sioux soon after retired—the village was spared; and so completely did the Christian Brave win the admiration and love of his uncivilized friends, that when, a year or two afterwards he intimated to them his intention of removing to another sphere of labour, they not only pleaded earnestly with him to remain amongst them, but they memorialised the United States' Governor to interpose his autho-

city to prevent him from going, saying, "He has done us good ; he has taught our children ; what shall we do when he is gone ?" And when they found that even the Government could not detain their benefactor amongst them, they were overwhelmed with grief, and parted with him as with a brother, whom they had learned to love and to revere ; and to this day they cherish the remembrance of the CHRISTIAN BRAVE.

CHAPTER V.

ON his coming into another district, the natives received Mr. Roberts kindly; yet he was sometimes in peril. He lived with one of their chiefs,—teaching the children, shewing them the use of various tools, and acquiring the knowledge of their language. One day, as he was travelling to a village twelve miles distant, an event befel him which shows how well he was justified in keeping strictly to his policy of *passive resistance*, even when most sorely tried.

He thus describes the occurrence :—“ Being weary, I stayed on my journey, and lay down on my blanket to rest. Soon after, a company of women appeared, who had been gathering wood. They were accompanied by a man on horseback, carrying a gun. The women passed on, the man lingered behind. As I went on my journey he came up with me and began to rifle my pockets. I begged him to desist, but he would not. He still pressed himself on me and asked for the blanket I carried, which he compared with his own, and seeing that mine was the larger, he threatened to shoot me.

He actually cocked his gun and presented it to my breast. Seeing him thus furious, and being determined not to fight, I gave him my blanket. As soon as he got it he mounted his horse, gave a war-whoop, and rode off; but shortly after I met with a chief, a friend of mine, *by whose influence my blanket was restored to me.*"

The Indians with whom Mr. Roberts now became acquainted are accustomed to be absent from their homes about six months of the year in search of the buffalo. They have their cornfields, and the women are made to cultivate them. In the month of June, when the hoeing of the corn is over, the men, women, and children join in the buffalo hunt for two months. They return when the corn is fit to boil, and subsist on green corn till the harvest in October. Then they shell the ripe corn, put it in leather bags, and bury it in deep holes. These, in some instances, are large enough to hold two or three hundred bushels. In these caves they lay up stores of all they need for winter use, and take great pains to conceal them effectually from their enemies. In November they start again on their winter hunt, which lasts till March, when they return with their dried meat and skins. The buffalo-robes, with otter and beaver skins, are then *prepared for the spring trade.*

While the women are engaged in dressing the skins, the men occupy themselves elsewhere; some go stealing horses, others proceed on war-excursions, and some make friendly visits to other tribes. When the spring trade opens, the skins are bartered for agricultural instruments, gunpowder, alcohol, &c., &c. The traffic being over they yield to idleness, and spend their time in lounging and gambling. It is regarded as a degradation to dig or to hoe, this being considered woman's work. The women dress themselves in skins or blankets, reaching just below the waist, and tied with a cord.

Their method of cooking is not cleanly. All parts of the animal are eaten without being washed. A dish is seldom cleaned. They roast, boil, and fry, but after a rough fashion, and often eat their food lying on their beds. The cruel tendencies of heathenism appear in their treatment of the aged. The young women show contempt to their mothers—making them do their dirty work, and sit behind as servants. They are left to die uncared for. Mr. Roberts met with an old woman, of whom he says, "She was about seventy years of age. As the rest of the tribe went on their hunt, she was left with scarcely any clothing, and no food for the winter. I stood by and witnessed their departure. The forsaken woman began to cry

and howl. A poor Indian who looked on was unable to repress his sympathy, and said he would take her home. I assisted him. His allowance of food for himself was a peck of corn a week ; but this he shared with the poor woman, giving her a mess of pottage daily for her breakfast, and supporting her through the winter."

The Indians not only make slaves of their women whilst living, but they do not recognise their existence in the future world. They assign high places in the next life to the brave and noble ; they believe that they go eastward and upward, and are with God ; that they live in a pleasant village, and possess hunting-grounds,—enjoying sports and pleasures like those of this world, yet far more delightful. The poor, the despised, the wicked, go westward, when they die, and little is known of their destiny. But if asked concerning the fate of their women, they shake their head and say, "They do not know." They are very fond of their children, and will not part with them even that they may be educated.

Of Satan they seem to have no idea. They regard God as a changeable being, and have much dread of Him. If things go well, they speak of Him as "good-natured ;" but when events are adverse—if they hunger, or fail in their hunt, or their enemies come upon them

—they say, "God is bad." In various ways they acknowledge a Deity. At their meals they generally put a portion of food on the ground and pray over it. They also have their religious feasts, when the sacred tobacco is smoked to the wind, to the buffalo, and to God. Before going on their hunt they have their religious meetings for several days. Then the *medicine man* determines which way God would have them go in order to be successful.

The *medicine man* possesses great influence in the tribe; he virtually governs the chiefs, and directs their movements. The people generally look on them with the utmost veneration, as they lay claim to supernatural powers, and pretend to work miracles. They represent themselves as invulnerable, and invite persons to shoot at them. They pretend to swallow daggers and knives, and by strange gestures and mysterious sounds they inspire bystanders with superstitious dread. From this cause, and the fear of their enemies, the people generally are restless and live in constant apprehension. They are afraid to go out unarmed; their horses are brought in of an evening close to their habitation, and sometimes within them for safety, while a drum is sounded through the night to keep off enemies.

Mr. Roberts remained two years and three months with this strange and interesting people.

learning their language and teaching them the facts and lessons of our holy faith. On leaving the State of Indiana, the United States' government Indian agent offered him payment for his services rendered to the Indians. He said that "Mr. Roberts had done more good among them than some men who had been paid for their work." He was urged to remain, and was offered a salary of three hundred dollars per annum; but he declined to prolong his stay, or to accept any pecuniary reward for his labours, saying that "he did not wish it, as he came not to receive but to spend;" and from his own scanty store—the results of his earnings on the journey—he supplied his most pressing wants. The year after he left the Sioux Indians came upon them, broke up the mission, and compelled them to retire. Mr. Roberts then returned to New York, after five years' absence.

CHAPTER VI.

ON revisiting his home, Mr. Roberts, finding his mother ill, remained there a year to assist her in the business. He then left for the State of Missouri, that he might resume the work to which God had called him; but on the river Ohio he was arrested by sickness, and obliged to remain through the winter at Cairo. He suffered severely from fever and ague. His physicians gave him up as incurable; at length, however, after eighteen months spent in Connecticut by the sea-side, his health returned, and he girded himself afresh for new exertions.

His affliction was not in vain. The suffering he had endured prepared him to sympathize more deeply with the sufferings of others. He learned more fully his own weakness and dependence upon God, and was stirred up to labour with intenser zeal as he saw "the night was at hand when he could no longer work."

On returning to the city of New York early in 1849, he found something to do among the most depraved of the population. He began

to train himself afresh for this enterprise by practising habits of self-denial. Having hired a small apartment, he provided himself with a few simple necessities; he would not indulge in the luxury of a bed, but was content with a cot and blankets. A block of wood served for a table, and another became his chair; he had two tin cups—one he used as a tea-pot, the other as his kettle; he had also a jack knife and a spoon. These were all his articles of furniture. His fare consisted of bread, and occasionally a little meat.

The sphere of his labours was the neighbourhood of the FIVE-POINTS. It was a den of iniquity. Several efforts had been made to reclaim its degraded inhabitants, but in vain. Mr. Roberts, in simple reliance on a Divine arm, ventured into the midst of scenes of guilt and misery which had appalled others. He entered cellars and dark rooms, where the vilest creatures lay in forlorn wretchedness, and revealed to them the Light of Life. Sometimes he encountered rude treatment, but when the aggressors grew violent in one street he went into another, and so he carried the Bread of Life to the impoverished homes of many. One day some of the people shut him up in a room and threatened to kill him. He could not get away; but, like Paul before Felix, he reasoned with them concerning a judgment to come in

such a manner that they became terrified and allowed him to make his escape.

After a time he was much encouraged in his work by seeing other labourers enter the district. God appeared working with his servants, and their toils were made productive of blessed fruit. Among many instances of usefulness, the following especially deserve notice. There was one house of a very disorderly character. It was opened for dancing and drinking; infamous women and profligate men made it their resort: all kinds of sins were said to be committed there. Mr. Roberts felt a strong desire to save the man who kept this den of iniquity. He applied to him for lodgings, but was refused on the ground that it was no place for such as he. By persisting, however, he at length obtained a room at the top of the house, and as he went in and out, day after day, he spoke to the man. In the morning he sowed the seed, and in the evening he did not withhold his hand, when, lo! after a little while good fruit appeared. One morning, as he approached, he saw the man betray signs of uneasiness, and he shuffled away his fiddle. A conviction of the error of his life had fastened on him, and he could not rest. Soon after he gave up the house. On the following Saturday he visited a prayer-meeting, where an invitation was given to those assembled to come forward

and inquire the way of salvation. This man, so recently engaged in a guilty career, heard the welcome and accepted it. He had not for six years previously entered a place of worship; but in that solemn hour the word of God, being "quick and powerful," penetrated his soul, and behold! all things became new. He stood forward as a weeping penitent, confessing his sins and seeking forgiveness through the blood of the Cross.

By thus seeing the lion changed into a lamb Mr. Roberts felt rewarded for his exertions; great was his joy in hearing him speak of God's goodness, and praying with his household. He has seen him no more, but confidently expects to greet him again on the morning of the resurrection.

On another occasion, as Mr. Roberts was returning from a prayer-meeting held in the same place, he was stopped by a young man, who took him by the hand and asked if he remembered him. Mr. Roberts said "No." The young man rejoined, "I have been living differently since you spoke to me just after I had had a *sprece*: I am resolved to live a better life." He requested Mr. Roberts to visit a sick friend, and, in parting, engaged to "Seek the Lord."

Before finally leaving the locality he called at every one of the houses of infamy and talked

to the inmates, giving them a short and kind admonition, and exhorting them to read the seventh chapter of Proverbs. Whilst thus engaged, a wretched creature, exasperated by the truth she heard, brought a bucket of water and threw it over him ; but he calmly went on his way, and sought no other revenge than that of prayer.

CHAPTER VII.

ABOUT this time Mr. Roberts's mind was painfully affected by the news of the sufferings of emigrants on their way to the gold diggings of California. Multitudes were leaving their homes and rushing to that distant land. Many, of necessity, fell sick by the way, and endured great privations. This information strongly moved his sympathetic nature, and he resolved to go forth and do his utmost for the relief of his suffering fellow-creatures. No society employed him as its agent, nor did any rich persons subscribe towards his support; yet, with a child-like heart, he trusted in the care of his Heavenly Father, and entered forthwith upon this undertaking of benevolence. Strangers, indeed, regarded his plan as romantic, and even his friends thought him presumptuous; but he knew that that gracious Providence which had so long ministered to his wants would open a path before him. He refused to accept more than a few dollars from his father, as he felt assured that he should obtain a free passage to Panama. The event fully justified

his confidence. On arriving at New York, he found a ship ready to sail to the Isthmus, in which a free passage was granted him. He sailed in May, 1849, and arrived at Chagres the following month. On board the vessel he was not idle. Having obtained a number of Bibles, he distributed them among the passengers and crew. When he reached Crucis, he found natives ready to take the luggage to Panama. He himself went thither on foot, and stayed for six months at the commencement of the sickly season. The climate in general he found very unhealthy. One day, Mr. Roberts fainted through extreme weakness, and he lay down under a shed. The daughter of one of the inhabitants came by. His appearance attracted her attention. By means of an interpreter, she asked if he would like some food. With a heart that felt for the forlorn stranger, and gave lightness to her step, she disappeared, and in a few minutes returned with nourishment, which she gave to him. On offering her money, she shook her head, and seemed displeased at the idea of payment for her services. Her kindly act had brought its own reward. She found it "more blessed to give than to receive."

On his regaining a measure of health, he addressed himself to the task of helping the sick and dying in the immediate neighbourhood.

He bought a few cooking utensils, so that he could make suitable provision for the sufferers wherever he might find them. Cholera and fever prevailed greatly. The inhabitants were much alarmed. A day was set apart for prayer and humiliation, that the Almighty might remove the scourge from them. The priests, with the military and the people, assembled in the public streets. Cannon were fired. Several processions from the church took place with lighted tapers and images. Among these a figure of the Virgin Mary, richly dressed, was conspicuous. As the procession passed, all persons were required to kneel; but Mr. Roberts would not render homage to superstition, and turned away. He found the priests generally most indolent and irreligious. After preaching in the morning, they would as judges preside at public games, or frequent cock-fights. Card-playing, dancing, and bull-fights were common even on the Sabbath-day.

During one of Mr. Roberts's visits in Panama, he found several sick men in a house which he had not gone into before. They were very destitute. He procured for them a physician and medicine, and from his own scanty means for some time expended two shillings a-day in the supply of their wants. In the same house he found a little girl, who wished to learn the English language. He

gave her a New Testament, and taught her hymns and prayers. She was greatly pleased, and would run out clapping her hands at his approach, and say, "Here comes my teacher." His frequent visits to the suffering poor had not escaped her notice, and when at length he was about to leave for California, she said, "What will the sick do without you? I will pray for you, that you may get safely to the end of your voyage, and my mother shall pray, and my aunt shall pray for you." As she had been reared amid the darkness of Romanism, it is not to be wondered at that she should add, in reference to a man who had lately died in their house, "I pray for that dead man every day." Mr. Roberts pointed her to the living, and said, "Pray for these; we are not told to pray for those who have passed into eternity."

At this time there was in the adjacent harbour an English ship, which had been deserted by a number of its men, who stole the boat in the hope of finding their way to the gold-diggings. Some of these men were soon arrested, others hid themselves, and were seized with sickness. Mr. Roberts, hearing of their sad condition, immediately interested himself on their behalf. He made known their wants, pleaded for them, and himself gave eight dollars for their relief—no small sum, considering his own poverty. He found other sick men in the

hospital, lying on the bare floor uncared for and ready to die. Mr. Roberts procured for them bedding, nourishing food, and attendance. Soon after, he went into a house which some emigrants were leaving. There he found more cases of sickness utterly neglected. He saw that half-measures would not do, so he went to live in the house for their sakes. Their illness increasing, he procured a physician, and took the whole care of them. The landlord of the house, a selfish, thoughtless man, interrupted Mr. Roberts in his humane occupation, forbidding him to light a fire, or to show the sick men any attentions. But our friend remained undaunted, and still pursued his work of kindness. Many nights and days he watched over these poor men, and ministered to their wants unassisted. Just as they were beginning to amend, the landlord roughly insisted on their leaving the house immediately. Mr. Roberts tried, but in vain, to get another lodging for his sick charge. He told the landlord of his want of success, and that it was impossible to remove the men. The physician also said that they must not go; it would be death to them. But the landlord was determined to have his way, and insisted upon taking the invalids to the city-hospital—a large open building without any conveniences. "*They must move,*" said he. Accordingly, he

came the next morning with a number of men and two soldiers armed with bayonets, to take away the sick men. He asked Mr. Roberts if he were going to leave. He answered "No." Then he said he would force them out. Mr. Roberts replied, "The Lord needs one house for His sick, and these men must stay." The landlord persisted, and proceeded to order their removal. But as soon as one of them was touched, he uttered a deep groan, as though he were dying. This filled the bystanders with alarm, and the attempt to remove the sick was abandoned. When they were sufficiently recovered, Mr. Roberts succeeded in removing them to another house, and he had the joy to know that at least one of these poor sufferers not only had his bodily strength renewed, but had become sanctified in heart through his instrumentality.

Many of the inhabitants of Panama were very kind to the emigrants. Among them was a physician who gratuitously visited the sick poor, while his family generously supplied them with food. On his becoming acquainted with Mr. Roberts, he granted him the use of a large room for conducting Divine service and holding temperance meetings. This was an instance of unusual liberality and kindness on the part of a Roman Catholic, and our friend availed himself of it in no sectarian spirit. He la-

boured not as a partisan but simply as a Christian; and to show their high appreciation of his work and the spirit in which it was conducted, the physician and his family called him the "Brother of Charity."

The agent of the Bible Society, passing through the city on his way to California, seeing the beneficial influence which Mr. Roberts was exerting, urged him to remain three months longer, and sent for a number of Spanish Bibles for distribution. As soon as the sickly season had passed, our friend prepared to resume his journey to California.

He accordingly engaged himself as a ship-nurse on board a vessel that was about to sail for San Francisco. During the voyage of 3,700 miles there occurred seventy-two cases of sickness to which he ministered. But his labours exceeded his strength, and he fell ill. Yet he was not forsaken; the cabin passengers were very kind to him, taking him in, and bestowing on him every attention. The religion of which he had so often spoken to others now filled his soul with rich consolations. At night, amid the moaning of the sea, as he lay weary and depressed, he heard a voice which said, "O man, greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE great Master, when sitting at the well of Samaria, declared, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." In this spirit our friend acted everywhere. The news of the grand discovery of gold in California, which made the heart of nations quiver, did not allure him. By faith he had overcome the world, and rejoiced in the possession of spiritual treasure such as earth can never bestow. He now lived only to please God—to sympathize practically with His purposes of mercy towards ruined men. Mr. Roberts, therefore, visited the gold-diggings, not to *get* but to *give*; not to enrich himself, but as God's almoner to impart the true riches to the poor and needy. On his arrival at San Francisco he found the town chiefly composed of tents, but houses were being rapidly erected. As soon as he went on shore he met an old friend, who took him to his lodgings and invited him to remain there. Shortly after he had seated himself, he became conscious of an overpowering sense of the Divine presence,

compelling him to say, "Surely God is in this place, and I know it."

Work of the kind which he most delighted in soon offered itself. A London merchant became ill and engaged the services of Mr. Roberts as nurse and attendant. He was offered ten dollars a day as wages. But this he refused, saying that it was his business, as the servant of God, to attend the sick without hope of reward. He remained with the invalid until his recovery, and on leaving he received from him fifty dollars for the relief of the poor.

The population of the city at this time was estimated at 40,000. The streets were unpaved, and in many places the mire was knee deep, so that empty carts would sink to the axle. Rent and provisions were exceedingly high. A small room cost 200 dollars a month. The price of a nights' lodging was a dollar, even without a bed. Butter was 5s. a pound; bread 18d. a 2lb. loaf. Emigrants were flowing in from all parts of the earth. Besides Americans and Indians, there were South Sea Islanders, Malays, Chinese, South Americans, English, Irish, Scotch, French, Germans, Hungarians, Turks, &c.; indeed, nearly all the nations of the world had their representatives there. With some exceptions the emigrants were above the ordinary class for

intelligence and enterprise. All had been or were going to "the diggings," and the one prevailing desire in almost every mind was the getting of wealth.

In the midst of this wild excitement our friend rejoiced to perceive that God was not quite forgotten in this strange place. He found there six chapels, belonging to different denominations; one to the Independents, one to the Baptists, one to the Methodists, two to the Episcopalians, and one to the Roman Catholics. There was also a congregation of Presbyterians, who were worshipping in the Custom-house.

Mr. Roberts soon commenced the work on which his heart was set. He found pleasure in the home visitation of the sick, poor, and friendless emigrants, acting as nurse and pastor without receiving payment from any quarter.

Whilst going with his Bible from tent to tent, he vaccinated gratuitously, a service for which others were paid sixteen dollars. By any means he was ready to help the necessitous around him. He soon found the hospital arrangements utterly insufficient. Although there were several private establishments where the richer class could go on paying their expenses, and one general hospital for the relief of the poor, another institution on more liberal principles was greatly needed. He, therefore,

agitated the question among the inhabitants ; public opinion was in favour of the project, and at length the Town Council were prevailed upon to pass a law for the erection of a city-hospital, which soon after was carried into effect. By this good work, the life of many a lonely fever-stricken stranger was preserved, and the comforts of the sick emigrants greatly increased.

In season and out of season, at home and abroad, he was ever on the watch for opportunities of usefulness. One night, a company of Scotch and Irish—the worse for strong drink—came home to the house where he lodged. They soon quarrelled and fought with each other. Mr. Roberts, not wishing to encounter such madmen in their fury, let them alone. The next day he found one of them ill, suffering from the effects of drink and riot. He was led to see and to acknowledge his folly. Mr. Roberts then brought him to his own room, made him clean and decent, and for a time furnished him with the means of subsistence. After repeated conversations, our friend had the happiness to see his efforts successful. The man became a new being, and resolved in God's strength to amend his life. He signed the temperance pledge, and zealously endeavoured to bring others to walk with him in ways of righteousness.

Another man, who was sick, sent to Mr. Roberts for help. He was told that the abandonment of his sin was indispensable to a cure. The question was proposed to him, "Will you at once leave your sin?" "I suppose I must," said the man. Mr. Roberts replied, "Christ will have no slaves in his kingdom; he must be served with a willing mind." The man then yielded himself to the force of truth, and said he would honestly take Mr. Roberts's advice. He did so, and became an active and consistent Christian. Our friend was at the expense of furnishing him with food and clothing, thus giving him a fresh start in life. He afterwards prospered, and in five months saved 150 dollars.

One morning Mr. Roberts found a man in his tent lying on the ground. He had been confined there two months by sickness. Sometimes he had been two days without food. When Mr. Roberts found him he had just eaten a raw potatoe, and had a jug of water by his side. He was the victim of religious delusion, and imagined that he was going to heaven, though uncleansed from his sins. But during his sickness Divine light entered his heart. He was awakened to reflection and penitence. The instructions and counsels of our friend served to direct him to Calvary, where he found peace for his troubled spirit,

and gave himself up to God. Mr. Roberts gained admittance for him to the hospital, where he remained a few weeks, and eventually recovered. He afterwards lived a consistent Christian life, and the last time Mr. Roberts saw him he was earning 250 dollars a month.

Similar instances of active kindness might be related, but we will add one only. Mr. Roberts found a woman, seventy years of age, who had followed her son many a weary mile to San Francisco. She found him, but he again wickedly deserted her, and Mr. Roberts discovered her in a tent, ready to perish with hunger. After supplying her wants he went in search of her son, and found him, but he refused to assist in taking care of his aged parent. Mr. Roberts would not, however, allow of a refusal, and by his earnest expostulations awakened in him some sense of shame, so that at length he returned to his mother and provided for her wants. Wherever he went Mr. Roberts made the distribution of the Scriptures a prominent part of his work. He called at the hospitals, taverns, gambling-rooms, and boarding houses, giving away Bibles wherever they would receive them, on the condition that they should lie on the public table for the use of visitors. At some houses of evil repute the offer was declined, with the

remark that "It was an improper place for a Bible;" thus they condemned themselves out of their own mouth.

In the month of July, 1850, Mr. Roberts left San Francisco, after having laboured there six months among the most abject of the population, for whom no man cared. Before leaving the city he had the pleasure of seeing the gambling-houses closed on the Sabbath, and the day generally far better observed. Public worship was more frequented. Several of the ministers of religion became more earnestly engaged in the suppression of intemperance. Several temperance societies were formed in various parts of the city and neighbourhood. Numbers renounced their drinking habits, so that the Fourth of July, the anniversary of American Independence, was publicly celebrated on temperance principles.

CHAPTER IX.

ON leaving San Francisco, Mr. Roberts, by means of a free passage, went to the city of Sacramento—a distance of 1,600 miles. His object in this journey was to meet the overland emigrants who were crossing the plains from the United States to California, believing that many of them would be in a destitute condition, and would fall sick on their arrival. He was there a little before they came, and he went up and down the place to examine its moral condition. Gambling-houses were on every side, and with the theatres, were open on the Lord's-day, whilst there was only one small place of worship in the city. The spirit of our friend was stirred within him as he beheld this wide-spread practical infidelity, and he resolved, by God's help, to do something to check it. He called on the minister, and enlisted his sympathy. Petitions were prepared, and numerously signed, in favour of closing on the Sabbath all places of public amusement, and suppressing horse-racing, with whatever tended *to disturb* the public peace. The petitions

being presented to the Town Council, they were soon passed into a law, and carried into effect.

After a week or two had been spent in this good work, the emigrants began to arrive. Mr. Roberts, on walking out, found four men lying under one tree, and four under another, suffering from fever. One sick man he took to his own room, and nursed him till his health was restored. Day after day he visited the sick, providing for them suitable accommodation, and giving them food and medicine. It was a time of much distress, and he witnessed most painful scenes. Bitter were the feelings of many. They would often cry out, "Oh that I had never come to California! Oh that my mother — my wife — my sister — were here to nurse and comfort me!" In one tent, Mr. Roberts found a man and his wife in bed, both dangerously ill. They only had a boy seven years old to wait upon them. The sun's rays were so powerful (the thermometer often stood at 120), that the atmosphere of the tent was almost insupportable, and the woman's life was in extreme peril. Our friend hired a house for their accommodation, and ministered in every way to their comfort.

And now he who had so often and laboriously served others must himself again suffer, and learn in solitude to live more entirely by faith on the Son of God, who was "made per-

fect through suffering." When Mr. Roberts had completed the benevolent work just related, he became ill from exposure to the heat and prevailing malaria. A raging fever prostrated him, and he lay alone in the store-house which had been lent him, destitute of common necessities. Here he remained for several days without a visit from anyone. At length, a man looked in, and Mr. Roberts asked him for a cup of water from an adjoining well. But he refused, saying, "I have an engagement in the city, and am in a hurry." Some time after, he heard footsteps and saw a stranger, of whom he requested the same kindness, but in vain. This man, also, was on pressing business, and could not wait. After enduring a yet longer suspense, a true friend discovered his helpless condition, and at once relieved him. The city physician was called in, who, knowing somewhat of Mr. Roberts's character, said, "This man must be taken care of." He was removed to the city hospital. But as his health did not much improve, he resolved to return to San Francisco as soon as he was able. On his arrival there, the agent of the American Tract Society generously took the invalid into his house, where he received the kindest attentions. He afterwards spent a fortnight with a Congregationalist, and another with a Baptist, who, knowing his previous history, sought

to show that Christian kindness to him which he had so often manifested to others. Thus our Lord's saying was verified, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

Our friend, however, still continued in a weak state, and regarding his work in California as accomplished, he resolved on returning to New York at the earliest opportunity. A gentleman whom he knew said to him one day, "I will endeavour to obtain for you a free passage. If I cannot, I will be at the expense myself; I shall be pleased with the opportunity of doing something for you; I feel I ought to have done more." Accordingly, he paid 300 dollars for his passage and outfit, besides making him a present of money at parting. He said, "I believe that God will bless me for doing this;" and "it is worthy of remark," said Mr. Roberts, "that some time after, when there were many fires in the city, the house in which this gentleman carried on his business was untouched, whilst others in the immediate vicinity were destroyed. This escape was, at the time, considered so remarkable, that it was noticed in the newspapers."

Mr. Roberts arrived again at New York in November, and at once left for Washington, in fulfilment of an engagement made two years before, that he would (Providence permitting)

pass the winter there. His health having improved, he sought remunerative employment, that he might sustain himself, and be able to spend some time among the poor of the city, "hoping," as he said, "to do them some spiritual good." He called on the trustees of the Washington Bible Society, and stated to them his desire to give himself to the work of distributing the Scriptures; but they objected to engage his services, as they had no funds available for such a purpose. On learning, however, that he was willing to work without wages, they made grants to him from time to time of Bibles, which he widely distributed among the coloured population. In his intercourse with this class, he inculcated habits of industry and self-government. He encouraged them to aspire after liberty—"trusting in God, and praying for the oppressor." He continued in this occupation four months, and then returned to his father's house on foot, intending, after a short period of rest, to bid his family farewell, as he believed, for the last time. Here he reviewed his eventful career, and began to meditate a new enterprise. Having heard of the spiritual darkness of Italy, he longed to visit it, and, if possible, to distribute even in Rome itself the words of that glorious Gospel which Paul the Apostle had once preached there. He went to Boston, and unfolded his

purpose to several ministers, who regarded the scheme as romantic and impracticable. But the faith of our friend, like the palm-tree, only grew the more vigorous for the attempts which were made to crush it. Believing it was the will of God that he should engage in this undertaking, he felt persuaded that Providence would co-operate in his behalf. In the spirit of the Apostle, he "did not count his life dear unto him," so that he might attain the sacred object on which his heart was set. In the absence of human sympathy, he resolved, as on former occasions, to trust to Divine guidance and his own exertions. By working with his hands, he saved sufficient money to defray the cost of his passage to Europe. With this he took a berth in the steamer, and made his way to Liverpool in November, 1851. Soon afterwards, he came to London, with scarcely a sovereign for his support, and no letters of introduction to secure him a welcome. On the following Sabbath, he entered a sanctuary, and became acquainted with the minister, who assisted him and set him to work in the manner detailed in the introductory chapter.

CHAPTER X.

IN the midst of varied and useful labours in the British metropolis, extending over several months, Mr. Roberts never lost sight of the great object of his voyage to the old world. His heart was ever set to go to Rome whenever the Lord should seem to prepare a path for his feet. He had read of the once Imperial city, and of the present benighted and humiliating condition of her people. The thought had taken possession of him, that if a poor man like himself could get to Rome, and were to make his dwelling among the Roman poor, learning their language, joining with them in their daily labour, finding his way, as opportunity offered, to the sick, and suffering, and sorrowful, winning by patient acts of kindness, forbearance, and goodwill their confidence and affection, that then he might present to many hearts, in a quiet conversational manner, the pure and simple truths of the Gospel. It was not his purpose to denounce Popery, but to breathe, as it were, a New Testament influence upon all to whom he could gain access.

He talked with us frequently of his hopes and plans. He also made known his prospects at the office of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and of one or two of the leading Missionary societies. The authorities there listened kindly to his statements, but could not venture to encourage what seemed so hopeless an undertaking. They represented, in the strongest colours, the difficulties and dangers of such a mission :—the jealous vigilance of the Papal authorities, their dread of popular instruction, the terror of their dungeons, and, possibly, even the peril of life itself. The simple reply to this was—"I have nothing to do with consequences. If I counted liberty or life in the matter, I should not have been thus far on my way. To Rome I intend to go!"

"And how do you propose to travel? What funds have you for the journey?"

"None. I intend to walk."

"But how shall you subsist by the way?"

"My Heavenly Father has never yet withheld my daily bread, and I can trust Him still."

At this juncture it occurred to a friend to make inquiry for some vessel bound for one of the Italian ports, and to ascertain on what terms a passage could be secured. On application to the Messrs. Fox at Falmouth, the case was met in the kindest and most generous

spirit, and a free passage was proffered to Leghorn in a schooner, bound from one of the Cornish ports with a cargo of fish. This unexpected opening, together with a free railway journey to the west, kindly furnished by one or two friends unknown to the recipient, removed all obstacles, and within eight hours from the receipt of the summons, the traveller was in the mail-train on his way to Plymouth. A note of introduction procured him a cordial and truly fraternal greeting from a friend in that town, by whom he was passed on to the small port of Mevagissey, in Cornwall. Here he found a schooner, chartered by Messrs. Fox, commanded by a good, kind-hearted Christian man (Captain Fishwick), who had most generously consented to convey him to Leghorn free of all expense, but who now speaks as though he were the obliged party in having such a passenger. The voyage was a season of mutual satisfaction and spiritual enjoyment to both, the only drawback that occurred being the protracted suffering of our friend from seasickness. Notwithstanding this, however, he endeared himself greatly to all on board by the interest which he manifested in their spiritual welfare, and his happy and affectionate manner imparting religious instruction. His counsel appeared to be specially blessed to the mind of the captain's son, who was serving as mate

on board. Arrived at Leghorn, the friends were in no haste to part, and an ample field of labour was at once presented among the shipping in that great port. It is interesting to hear Captain Fishwick speak of the labours of his guest at this period. From ship to ship he made his way; at first shunned and repulsed, but never disheartened; overcoming by degrees all opposition, and winning at last the confidence and warm affection of the various crews by which they were surrounded. They would gather round him in groups, on the deck, or down in the forecastle of their ships, listening eagerly as he read to them the Holy Scriptures, and expounded to them the living truths of Christianity. Religion, taught by such an exemplar, melted many a stubborn heart; and the captain of a large American ship, who had been a most profane character, acknowledged to Captain Fishwick, with tearful emotion, that it was a blessed day for him which laid the schooner alongside his ship, and brought such a visitor on board. The Bethel flag flew frequently from the schooner's masthead; prayer-meetings were held; and Captain Fishwick himself preached regularly every Sabbath-day.

It was impossible that labours so devoted and successful should pass without observation and remark, especially in a country where spi-

ritual light and knowledge are regarded as the greatest elements of danger to the powers that be. The Papal authorities were speedily in possession of the alarming fact, that a simple-hearted Christian man, without ecclesiastical authority, without fee or reward, influenced solely by the love which he bore for the ignorant and the perishing, was at work in their city; that he was gladly and gratefully welcomed by those among whom he laboured; and that many were beginning to inquire the way of salvation.

The alarm of the Leghorn judicials and priests, and their difficulty in dealing with this dangerous innovator, would have been greatly mitigated, if the weapons of his spiritual warfare had been those of ordinary mould and temper. Had he laboured to detach men as sedulously from creeds as from sin; had he included Satan and the Pope in the same breath of denunciation; had he evinced an aggressive determination to make men proselytes, instead of simply inviting them to become Christians, he would easily have been disposed of as a violator of the law, and might have caused no greater trouble, perhaps, than a consular remonstrance, and an early removal from the country. The heavenly armour, however, in which he went about "*doing good*," left him invulnerable *in the midst* of enemies who watched with

ceaseless vigilance his every movement, but sought in vain an occasion of offence against "the meek and quiet spirit" of the Christian "Brave."

True, they confined his operations almost exclusively to the shipping in the port; drawing around the quays and wharves of Leghorn a cordon of police inspection, which never permitted him to enter the dwelling of a Livonese without the company of a priest or a policeman. Although he continued thus strictly watched during his stay in the city, no complaint could be fastened upon him either by the civil or ecclesiastical authorities. They were not ignorant of the influence he succeeded in establishing over the minds of the sailors, but their authority did not extend to the decks of English and American vessels, and they were obliged to content themselves with damming off from the minds of their own countrymen any possible streamlet of truth that might flow to them through the lips of an apostolic stranger.

The time at length arrived when our friend felt that his long-cherished prospect of visiting Rome must be carried into effect, and the parting scene on board the little schooner which had borne him to the shores of Italy, was one of deep and touching interest. At his request, the Captain assembled all the crew, with his

own family, in the cabin, where their beloved guest read to them the twentieth chapter of the Acts, and when he came to the three concluding verses, all hearts were melted ; and the language which so vividly portrays the separation of Paul from his friends became precisely descriptive of what took place, for "*when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.*"

And now, his services in Leghorn closed, his last friendly words of Christian sympathy exchanged, the last farewell uttered, he set out on his solitary way, among a people with whose language he was yet unfamiliar, and whose habits, prejudices, and principles were all strange to him. We may well conceive the sense of utter loneliness which would at times steal over his soul, and which would assuredly have daunted any heart less truly brave, or less reliant upon that "*perfect love which casteth out fear ;*" and with what emotion must he have gazed, for the first time, from some mountain path, upon the seven-hilled city, towards which his loving, yearning sympathies had been so long directed. Here was the great seat and centre of that spiritual darkness and corruption over whose unhappy fruits he had so long mourned. The ignorance, the superstition, the

prostration of the Roman people, with all their physical suffering and social degradation, he was now to encounter face to face ; and he had come from his transatlantic home with the hope and purpose that a way might be opened up for him to introduce, if it might be but a ray of pure simple Gospel truth and love, among those whom he longed to enlighten and to cheer.

How often had the streets of Imperial Rome witnessed the entry of brave men — the mightiest conquerors on the page of history — when, amid the tumult of popular applause, they came bearing with them the triumphs and spoils of Roman victory ; but never had the Coliseum and the Capitol looked down upon a truer hero than the pilgrim stranger whose feet now trod the ways where once walked the Cæsars. He was not insensible to the difficulty and danger of his task ; he knew that the authorities of Rome had been advised of his coming, and would be little disposed to tolerate his mission ; but he came willing to risk all in the service of the Master whom he loved.

He was not left long in suspense as to the light in which his character was viewed. He was at once placed under the strictest surveillance of the police, and was never allowed to quit his lodging without having a soldier or a priest at his elbow. He remained for more

than a month a sort of prisoner at large; his patience and gentleness preserving him from giving any occasion of arrest, but an effectual barrier being put to his contemplated sphere of labour. Finding that it was hopeless to attempt any direct access to the minds of the Italian people, it occurred to him that he might, perhaps, indirectly scatter the seeds of truth, by stationing himself at some port, under British rule, where he could visit and talk with Italian sailors; and for this purpose he found that the island of Malta was peculiarly adapted, the intercourse between Valetta and the various Italian ports being more frequent than any other station in the Mediterranean. To Malta accordingly he repaired, leaving behind him the following characteristic note, addressed to the tribunal of Roman police; a document which, for its honesty and fearlessness, has probably few parallels in the archives of that body:—

"To the Roman Police.

"Sirs,—I have now been in Rome forty days, and I have not spoken to the people, nor troubled any one. The people have been civil and kind, therefore the blessing of the Lord is with the people; but the priests, police, and soldiers have annoyed me much from day to day. Your priests are proselyting in the *United States* with perfect freedom, yet I have

not done so here ; and why do you imagine evil against me ? Let him that is without sin first cast a stone. You may say, our craft is in danger, and great is Diana of the Ephesians ; but I say, God is greater, and there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus ; and other foundation can no man lay than that is laid. Verily, there is a fault among you that there are so many beggars in the streets. Let them be taken out of the streets, and let work be provided for them—there are uncultivated lands enough for them all ; and break off your sins by showing mercy to the poor : and the priests, to avoid fornication, let them marry. To the soldiers I say, do violence to no man, and follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. The kingdom of Christ consists in righteousness, peace, and true holiness, and needs not a wicked soldiery to defend it. Your trust should be in God, and not in soldiers and ceremonies. My prayer to God for you is, that you may look to God for grace to guide you in all your affairs ; that the blessing of God may be with you, and God be glorified in you.

“ My best wishes to you, and much love to the people.

“ A. ROBERTS.”

We had requested our friend when he left

London to write to us occasionally, that we might know how he was prospering. He told us that he was no great penman, and could not promise much in that way. However, he found time to write us a few lines from Malta, so characteristic of the man, that we insert them.

"Malta, May 23rd, 1853.

"Dear Friend,—To you grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied. When I left you I promised you nothing, so if I send you only a few words you will not be much disappointed. I had a very good passage to Leghorn, and found Captain Fishwick a warm-hearted Christian. I remained on board his vessel nearly two months after our arrival at Leghorn, employing my time in distributing the Scriptures and tracts amongst English and American seamen, and visiting the sick at the hospital. A goodly number became abstainers from the use of intoxicating drinks, and some began to pray. Here I was closely watched by the police, while drunkards could go with liberty.

"I arrived at Rome on the 21st of December. Here also I was beset on all sides by priests and police, but I let them alone forty days, and then asked for my passport, and wrote a letter to the police, stating to them the treatment which I had received. A copy of
the letter I send you. Popery is cruel, and its

days are numbered. Since my arrival at Malta, I have been engaged in distributing the Scriptures amongst Italian seamen; I find no people more ready to receive the Word than they.

"The blessing of God has attended me; goodness and mercy have followed me. My wants have been supplied. I do not forget the kindness of those friends that helped me in England. I thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, for all His mercies, and why was this grace given to me in such abundance? To God be all the glory, Amen.

"A. R."

At a later date we received from him a letter, in which he says—

"I have sold more than 300 copies of the Italian Scriptures to Italians and Austrians, and hope to sell many more."

Intelligence has reached us, through a mutual friend, that Mr. Roberts's services in Malta were eminently valuable and successful. He became endeared to many Christian people there, and so highly were his services among the sailors appreciated by some of the leading merchants, that very liberal offers were made to him to settle down as a sailors' missionary for the port. Every offer, however, of remuneration was respectfully declined. He felt that having

freely received of the grace of God, freely he must impart it; and he continued, therefore, a voluntary in his Saviour's service. After some months' active labour, he resolved to visit Constantinople, believing that the Lord would have work for him to do among the scenes of suffering and violence incident upon the outbreak of war. Our last accounts left him at Constantinople, and we can readily imagine that among the dead and dying, on the battle-field, in the camp, the hospital, and the bivouac, those hands ministered to the wants of the wounded, and that voice whispered hope and consolation to many who were led to cry, in the agony of impending death, "What must I do to be saved?"

May He who was with Peter in his dungeon, and with Paul in all his journeyings, direct the path and prosper the work of the *Christian Brave*.

CHAPTER XI.

SINCE the last page was written ten years have passed away, and no tidings of Mr. Roberts have reached us. Our endeavours to track his steps any farther, or, to discover his fate, have been in vain. It is, therefore, not improbable that he has finished his course, and "entered into the joy of his Lord." But though he may have rested from his earthly labours, "his works follow him." The living testimony which he uttered still survives. Words of kindness from his lips are yet treasured in human hearts; and deeds of mercy wrought by him can never be forgotten.

In order to form a true estimate of his character, we must judge of it by the precepts of the Gospel, as illustrated by the lives of Christians in the earliest ages of the Church, rather than as generally practised in our own time.

Our Lord declares that "If any man will come after him he must deny himself," and that "Whoso forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be His disciple." The Apostles and the first

Christians, to a great extent, evidently acted according to our Lord's injunction, and they not only avoided that which was positively sinful, but voluntarily submitted to a life of privation and toil, as having fewer temptations, and presenting greater opportunities for the diffusion of the "incorruptible seed."

Our friend was, doubtless, one in spirit and in practice with these primitive confessors. He "denied himself" much, and cheerfully "forsook all that he had for Christ's sake." He had a thriving business, as a farmer, in a fertile district, and had he been a worshipper of Mammon, he might have acquired wealth, but he gave all this up, with many of the comforts and indulgences of life, "for the Gospel's sake." He wore the cheapest clothing. He abstained from all intoxicating drinks. He refrained from marriage, and relinquished the tender charities of home and friendship, though himself of a most gentle and loving nature, that he might pursue his benevolent undertakings without hindrance.

Neander tells us of the sainted Severinus, in the fifth century, on the banks of the Danube, "who voluntarily renounced all the conveniences of life, and contented himself with the most meagre fare, that effeminate men might learn from him to make themselves independent of outward things, to rise above

present sufferings by living in the Spirit, to mollify and sweeten want and destitution by spiritual joy." Thus did Mr. Roberts, by his habitual self-sacrifice wherever he went, rebuke richer Christians who were only giving of their abundance, whilst he was devoting HIS ALL, reserving nothing for self-indulgence that he might the more effectually accomplish the mission to which he believed God had called him.*

While similar practices of self-denial have been often exemplified by others for different purposes, such as the saving of money, the gratifying of ambition, the love of notoriety, the disguising of hypocrisy, or the hope of meriting the Divine favour, our friend denied himself only that he might tread in the steps of primitive disciples, by doing the will of God, and "serving his generation faithfully." All his sacrifices and efforts were directed to the single object of making others better and happier. It was, indeed, a "labour of love" with him to lighten the burden of the oppressed, to wipe away the tears of the mourner, to feed the hungry, to visit and relieve the sick, to instruct the ignorant, and to adapt the message of the Gospel to the various phases of our fallen and sorrowing humanity. His labours seemed never to have an end. He acted as though he could never do enough for

men, and he thought nothing of risking his health and life in exertions to benefit them.

And all this was done with the greatest humility. He hated ostentation. Like our Lord, "He did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." He always chose "the lowest place," and appeared like a child, as though he felt himself "less than the least of all saints," till, as we have seen, he heard that something of moment was to be done, when at once he would throw off his reserve, and be among the foremost in laborious exertion; or when the wail of suffering fell on his ear, no one could prevent his taking the first place as the most tender of nurses to watch by the sick, and relieve their necessities without noise or pretence.

Mr. Roberts seemed to have an abiding sense of *individual responsibility*. In his own country, as in ours, there are noble societies formed for the doing of almost every kind of benevolent work in which he was interested. He might have been content with subscribing to these without relinquishing his worldly business, or he might have become an agent of one of them. But as the previous pages show, he did neither. In order that he might have more freedom in applying his resources to the peculiar exigencies of his work, and not being *conscious* that he needed the stimulus of a

committee to induce him to fulfil his duty, nor thirsting for the praise of men, but simply resolving to labour as under the eye of the "great Task-master," at whose feet he had consecrated *his all*, he preferred to work alone.

We are aware that many Christians could not, even if they would, exactly follow our friend in his manner of doing good, or the machinery of society would soon stand still. Yet we know that the most heroic work in the world has been achieved in this way, and that *every* disciple has had addressed to him the solemn command, which only the world's din has prevented his hearing, and obeying more perfectly, "*Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.*" Nor can any Christian deny that there was a period when he fully recognized the duty of personal exertion; when, amid the fervours of his "first love" to Christ and to souls, he sang the sublime language—

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

But perhaps the man himself has changed since that time, although God, and the Gospel, and the souls of men, and his individual responsibility are unchanged and unchangeable. Have

not "the cares of this life" or "the deceitfulness of riches" prompted him to attempt a compromise with the duty he owes to God and to his fellow-men? Is he not satisfied with leaving it undone, or doing it only by proxy—subscribing a small proportion of his gains to a public institution, to do on his behalf the work which God holds him accountable for doing, or for not doing?

Mr. Douglas, of Cavers, has remarked that "the glory of the latter days results from *all* declaring the truth. Respecting the millenium it is said, 'They shall no more teach every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest.' The only reason for man not publishing the truth here given, is the truth being already known. And a time is thus pointed out when every man will do his duty in publishing the truth, for that which men cease to do, they must at one time have done.

. . . . Every believer will become a labourer, and every one will say to his neighbour, 'Know the Lord,' till, owing to their very success, these labourers are no longer needed, because the result is fully gained;—'The earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the channel of the sea.' Such was the creed of Mr. Roberts, and, therefore, *he did not wait for others, nor seek to devolve*

on them his duty ; but he himself went forth manfully, "doing with his might" the task set before him.

In thus comparing the conduct of our friend with the teaching and facts of the New Testament, there appears in it nothing extraordinary ; he only seems a consistent Christian. But those who judge of him in the light of the nineteenth century, and who make the practice of the majority of professing Christians around them the test of truth, will doubtless regard his actions as "eccentric," and say that he was "a mere enthusiast." Yet so it has ever been with the best and noblest of the world's benefactors, who have stood forth to utter a profound conviction, to do a heroic work, or to make large sacrifices for the truth's sake. Their names have generally been derided by their contemporaries ; yet posterity has done them justice, and they have been numbered among those "of whom the world was not worthy."

In this age of luxury, when a "comfortable" Christianity prevails in the churches, and "the offence of the Cross" is so easily avoided, the conduct of Mr. Roberts appears strange and peculiar ; but only so, because he faithfully performed what he regarded as his duty—acting as a Christian "Brave," fighting courageously and alone, so far as human co-opera-

tion was concerned, against the ignorance, disorder, and misery that surrounded him, renouncing the world's pleasures and gains, and refusing to "confer with flesh and blood." In former times, there have been numerous instances of devoted men and women who have done all that our friend did, and many have exceeded him in acts of self-sacrifice for the good of others;* but in the present day, such heroism is uncommon, and, therefore, we consider it deserves to be noted, and held up for imitation.

Like the illustrious worthies whose names are recorded in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the mainspring of Mr. Roberts's practical benevolence was FAITH,—simple and earnest faith in God, in Christ, in the Gospel, and in its adaptation to the wants and sorrows of men. It was this faith in the unseen that kindled the fires of his zeal, that nerved his energies for the good fight, that made him regard opposition with indifference, that enabled him to bear affliction with composure, and after the example of Moses, to "endure, as seeing Him that is invisible."

It may be asked, What was his recompense for all the labour and suffering that he underwent? Verily, as it regards those "good things" which Dives enjoyed, and which men

* See note at end of the volume.

generally look upon as suitable rewards for signal services, he had little enough. We have seen how rarely he would accept of money. As for men's applause, that he distrusted. What, then, could he deem sufficient to compensate him? Nothing in the universe could satisfy this man except the inward "testimony that he pleased God," the visible signs of the Divine presence and co-operation, rendering his efforts fruitful, and that "respect to the recompense of reward," held out to him and to all who suffer for righteousness' sake, in the words of Jesus of Nazareth, "VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, THERE IS NO MAN THAT HATH LEFT HOUSE, OR BRETHREN, OR SISTERS, OR FATHERS, OR MOTHERS, OR WIFE, OR CHILDREN, OR LANDS, FOR MY SAKE, AND THE GOSPEL'S, BUT HE SHALL RECEIVE AN HUNDRED-FOLD NOW IN THIS TIME, AND IN THE WORLD TO COME ETERNAL LIFE."

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APPENDIX.

NOTE p. 82.

In former times there have been numerous instances of devoted men and women who have done all that our friend did, and many have exceeded him in acts of self-sacrifice for the good of others.

“Another manifestation of the benevolence of the primitive Christians that deserves a particular notice was *love for the souls of men*. It was a remarkable feature of their character, and though inseparable from the anxiety they displayed on every occasion to promote the best interests of men, it yet occupied exclusively the minds of some of them, and gave rise to exertions which nothing but interests of eternal moment could have originated. Not to speak of those who dedicated themselves to the preaching of the Gospel, there were many in private life who expended everything they could spare from the bare support of life on the purchase of Bibles, and on every suitable occasion distributed them to the poor—a gift, the value of which cannot be estimated without taking into consideration the scarcity and the immense price which, in those days, a single copy of the Scriptures cost. But besides this excellent species of charity, which many of the wealthier Christians devised for themselves, there were others who voluntarily submitted to

the most extraordinary sacrifices, with the glorious view of bringing men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. One man named Serapian, for instance, is recorded to have sold himself into the family of a heathen actor, and continued for years cheerfully performing the most servile offices, till having been the honoured instrument of converting the husband and wife and whole family to Christianity, he received from the grateful converts the reward of his liberty; and not long after, during a visit to Sparta, the same individual hearing that the governor of that city had fallen into dangerous errors, offered himself again as a slave, and continued for two years in that humble and ignominious situation, when his zealous efforts for the conversion of his master being crowned with fresh success, he was treated no longer as a servant, but as a brother beloved in the Lord.

“Various were the sources whence the early Christians drew the ample means necessary to enable them to prosecute such an extensive system of benevolence as was involved in their care for the poor, attentions to the sick, and charities to those who were persecuted for righteousness’ sake. The most steady and available fund was the common treasury of the Church, which was supplied every Sabbath by the voluntary contributions of the faithful, and out of which there was a weekly distribution of alms to multitudes of widows, orphans, and old people, who were stated pensioners on her bounty. In cases of great or public calamity, *fasts* were appointed, which by the saving

effected in the daily expenses of all, even of the poor, were an approved and certain means of raising an extraordinary collection, and when that was found insufficient to meet the emergency, it not unfrequently happened that the pastors sold or melted the gold and silver plate that had been presented to their Churches for sacred purposes. Many persons, too, were in the habit of observing in private quarterly, monthly, or weekly fasts, on which occasions they either took little food or none at all, and transmitted the amount of their daily expenditure to the funds of the Church, while others voluntarily bound themselves to set aside a tenth part of their income for the use of the poor, and placed it in like manner in the Church's treasury. Besides, there were many wealthy individuals who, on their conversion to Christianity, from a spirit of ardent gratitude to the Saviour, sold their estates, and betaking themselves to manual labour, or to the preaching of the Word, devoted the price of their property to benevolent purposes. Others who gave up their patrimony to objects of Christian benevolence, chose to retain the management in their own hands—as, for example, a rich merchant who with part of his money built a spacious house, and with the rest of it entertained all strangers travelling in his neighbourhood, took charge of the sick, supported the aged and infirm, gave stated alms to the poor, and on every Saturday and Sabbath caused several tables to be furnished for the refreshment of all who needed his bounty.”—*Coleman's Antiquities of the Christian Church*, ch. xviii. sect. 9.

PATRICK, THE APOSTLE OF THE IRISH.

This remarkable man was born in Scotland about the year 372. He was the son of a poor unlearned deacon belonging to the village church. No particular care was taken of his education, and he led a thoughtless life, without laying to heart the religious instructions of his parents, till towards his seventeenth year.

Pirates, of the savage tribe of the Scots who then inhabited Ireland, landed at Patrick's residence and carried him and others away as prisoners. He was sold into the service of a Scottish chief, who committed to him the care of his cattle. Trouble led his heart to God, whom during the days of quiet in his parents' house he had not thought of. As he wandered about with the cattle in the ice and snow he enjoyed intercourse with God in prayer and meditation. Speaking of himself he says,—“I was about sixteen years old, and knew nothing of the true God, when I and many thousands were carried away into captivity. . . . Then God opened my unbelieving mind, so that although late I thought of my sins, and turned with my whole heart to the Lord my God, to Him who looked down on my low condition, had pity on my youth and ignorance, and before I knew Him protected

and cherished me, as a father his son. . . . Wherefore I must testify aloud, in order to make some return to the Lord for such great blessings." . . .

. After spending six years in the service of this chief, the way was opened for him to return to his home. Great was the joy of his parents to see their son again, who had endured so much, and they entreated him now to remain constantly with them. But Patrick felt an irresistible call to carry the message of salvation to the people among whom he had passed his youth. . . . His relations and friends strove to keep him back, and represented that such an undertaking far exceeded his powers. We are informed of this by himself:—"Many opposed my going, and said behind my back, 'Why does this man rush into danger among the heathen?'" "But they could not comprehend the matter." Yet nothing could turn him aside, for he depended on the power of the Lord who had imparted to him an inward assurance that He had called him, and would be with him. He says himself, "Whence did I receive so great and blessed a gift, to know and love God, to leave native land and parents, although many gifts were offered me with tears if I would remain there? And against my wishes I was forced to offend my relations and many of my well-wishers. But

according to God's guidance, I did not yield to them at all, not by my own power, but it was God who conquered in me and withstood them all, so that I went to the people of Ireland to publish the Gospel to them, and suffered many insults from unbelievers, and many persecutions even unto bonds, resigning my liberty for the good of others. And if I am found worthy, I am ready to give up my life with joy for His Name's sake."

Thus Patrick went to Ireland in the year 431. The knowledge he had obtained of the Irish language was now of great use to him. By the sound of a kettle-drum he collected large assemblies of people in the open air, and told them of the sufferings of the Saviour for sinful humanity; and the word of the cross evinced its power on the hearts of many. Patrick met indeed with warm opposition. The priests and national bards, who had great influence, instigated the people against him, and he had to endure many severe persecutions. But he conquered by steadfastness of faith, by glowing zeal, and by the attractive power of love. . . .

Patrick endeavoured to avoid even the semblance of seeking his own glory or profit. A man who, according to all human appearance, was not fitted to accomplish anything so great, who was called from obscurity and meanness to so high a place, and hence one in whom, as

it often happens, many who knew him earlier and only according to the flesh were not disposed to recognize what the Spirit of God had effected—for such an one it was necessary to be peculiarly careful to take away every pretext from those who were disposed to explain everything by flesh and blood, whatever they could not measure or conceive of by the common standard. When many persons affected by gratitude and love to the teacher of salvation, their spiritual father, voluntarily brought him presents, and pious females gladly surrendered their ornaments for the purpose, Patrick, in order to avoid every appearance of evil, refused them all, though the givers, both men and women, were at first offended. He himself made presents to the heathen chiefs (one of whom had formerly plundered him, and imprisoned him in fetters for a fortnight) in order to procure from them peace for his flock. He redeemed many Christians from captivity, and was ready as a faithful shepherd to give up everything, even life itself, for his sheep. In his confessions, after many years labours, he thus addressed his converts:—"In order that you may give me joy, and that I may always give you joy in the Lord, I do not repent of what I have done, and yet it is not enough for me. I give up, and will give up far more. . . . I have not written this in order to

gain honour from you. That honour is enough for me which is not seen but is believed in the heart. . . . But I see myself already in this world exalted by the Lord above measure. I know very well that poverty and discomfort suit me much better than riches and a life of pleasure. Yes, even the Lord Christ became poor for our sakes. Daily I expected to be seized, to be dragged to slavery, or to be killed. But I feared none of all these things on account of the promises of heaven; for I have cast myself in the arms of Him who rules over all. What shall I say unto my Lord, or what shall I promise Him? For I have no power unless He gives it me! . . . But He knows that I greatly desire that He would give me the cup of suffering to drink as He has given it to others who love Him. . . . I beseech Him that I may be allowed to shed my blood for His name, with those my new converts who have been imprisoned, even though I should obtain no burial, or even should my body be torn in pieces by wild beasts. . . . For beyond a doubt we shall rise again with the splendour of the sun, that is, with the glory of our Redeemer Jesus Christ, as fellow-heirs with Him, and bearing His image; for we shall reign by Him, and through Him, and with Him."

SEVERINUS IN GERMANY

Mention has been made already of this distinguished man. Amidst the ravages and desolation which followed the immigration of the nations by which the Roman empire was shattered in pieces, God sent assistance after the death of the world-master Attila, in the person of Severinus, inflamed with holy love, to the various tribes in the vicinity of the Danube. His whole appearance had something mysterious. As he was not accustomed to speak of himself, nothing determinate is known of his native country, but probably he was a native of the West, and had withdrawn into one of the deserts of the East in order to devote himself to a quiet life of holy contemplation. There he received the Divine call to sacrifice his rest for the benefit of the suffering people in the West. The regions in which he placed himself, known at this day as Austria and Bavaria, were just then the scene of the greatest desolation and confusion. No place was secure; one savage tribe followed another; all social order was broken up. The country was laid waste; the natives were carried away as captives; universal destitution and famine followed the incessant wars. As Severinus had lived long among these people, and laboured much among

them, his fame was widely spread, and the episcopal dignity was offered him; but he rejected it, declaring "that it was enough for him to be deprived of his beloved solitude, and to be brought by the Divine Providence into these parts where he was obliged to live among men who gave him no rest."

It must indeed have made a great impression on persons rendered effeminate by luxury, as well as on the savage tribes, when they saw Severinus sacrificing all social enjoyments and satisfying himself with the scantiest fare, and in the midst of winter, when the Danube was frozen over, going about suffering severe privations. Men belonging to the barbarous tribes, who saw before them only weaklings whom they had crushed by physical force, must have been struck with wonder when they witnessed with their own eyes how such a man, with a body reduced by abstinence, could accomplish the greatest things, simply by a spiritual power, the power of a soul animated with faith and love.

He was very far from regarding the privations to which he submitted as peculiarly meritorious, or entitling him to be esteemed a saint. If any commended him on this account, he said, "Do not imagine that what you see is a merit on my part; it ought rather to serve you as a wholesome example. Let it humble

human pride. We are chosen for this purpose that we may effect some good ; as the Apostle says, the Lord ' hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.' Only pray for me, that the gifts of my Saviour may not issue in the increase of my condemnation."

However strict and severe he was against himself, he was full of tender sympathy for the wants and sufferings of others. "He felt hunger," his pupils said of him "only when others suffered hunger: he felt cold, only when others were destitute of clothing." He made use of everything in order to assist the necessitous in these parts. His prayers, his exhortations, the example of his self-sacrificing love, rendered possible what was apparently impossible in a desolated, impoverished country that was always liable to famine.

While he thus cared for the earthly wants of men, and divided earthly gifts among them, he never omitted to direct their attention to the source of all spiritual and temporal blessings. He admonished the poor that they should receive these gifts as from the hands of the Lord, and offer praise to Him. His love was wide and comprehensive, as is the nature of genuine Christian love, not narrowed by any partial considerations. In the barbarians, as well as in the Romans, in Arians not less than in the

orthodox, he beheld those who required his aid. When he met with the princes or generals of the wild barbarians who were attached to the Arian doctrine, he did not begin with disputing on their favourite dogma—he did not repel them by pronouncing sentence of condemnation on the doctrine they professed; but attracted them first of all by the power of love, and then imparted to them such exhortations or instructions as were best adapted to the circumstances of each individual.

In his last hours he assembled his brethren around him, and in an affecting manner exhorted them to devote their lives to God. Then embracing them he cheerfully took the Holy Supper, and desired them not to weep, but to sing psalms. But as they could not utter the words for very grief, he began himself to sing, "Praise the Lord in His holy place; let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." These were his last words. After labouring successfully for thirty years in the midst of devastation, and displaying magnanimous trust in God, which gave courage and strength to the weak and suffering, he left the world on the 1st of January, 482.

ELIGIUS, BISHOP OF NOYON.

The life of this pious bishop is of more importance to us, because a considerable part of his life was spent in an ordinary civil station and business before he entered the ecclesiastical order; and hence his life may be taken as a representation of the civil life of pious persons in his age. He was born at Chatelet in the year 588. He belonged to an ancient Christian family, and received a pious education, the effects of which were spread over the rest of his life. When a youth, his father Eucherius placed him with a goldsmith, who was noted in his art, who superintended the public mint at Limoges. By the skill which he acquired in this art, by his general abilities, and by his intelligent Christian conduct, he soon became known through the whole neighbourhood. Religion gave him power and pleasure in labour; and by the labour which directed his attention to earthly things, he felt so much the greater need to refresh his spirit by occupying it with heavenly things. He attended public worship regularly and zealously, and what he heard read from the Holy Scriptures, was impressed deeply on his mind, and was the subject of his frequent meditations. When afterwards he

obtained a Bible as his own property, he always laid it open before him at his work.

He afterwards left his native country, and resided at the court of King Clotaire II. The royal treasurer Bobbo became intimate with him, and received him into his family. It happened that the king wished to have a chair ornamented with gold and precious stones, made in a certain manner which he described. Since none of his own workmen could make it according to his wishes, the treasurer applied to Eligius, who declared himself ready to undertake it. Much gold was given him for this work, and he used it with such care and economy, that instead of one chair, such as the king wished, he was able to furnish two. Eligius caused one of the chairs to be brought to the king, but kept the other at his home. The king admired the workmanship and expressed his satisfaction. But he was still more astonished when Eligius sent for the other chair, and said to him, "That I might not be chargeable with any negligence, I have used the gold that remained for this work." The king immediately said, "He who is found so faithful in little things, will be faithful also in greater;" and Eligius after this occurrence, was held in increasing respect for his talents and character. Such great confidence was now placed in him, that if any work was to be executed for the Court,

gold, silver, and jewels were entrusted to him without measure or weight, since there was the assurance felt that he would take no more than he needed. On one occasion he requested the king to grant him a piece of land—the property of the crown—for religious purposes. The king consented; but Eligius afterwards found that he had stated the extent of the ground to be about a foot less than it actually measured. This vexed him exceedingly; immediately he hastened to the king, and informed him. The king said to the bystanders; “See! what a noble thing is Christian integrity! My nobles and treasurers amass great wealth for themselves, and this servant of Christ, on account of his fidelity to the Lord, could not be easy to remain silent about a handful of earth!”

Although Eligius lived at court in the midst of the world, yet his heart was always turned from the world and set on God and divine things. His going out and coming in, the beginning of his business, was accompanied by prayer, and he prayed not about earthly goods for the body, but about heavenly gifts for the soul. . . . When, by his usual course of conduct, he had won sufficient respect to be able to deviate from the usual style of dress without giving offence, he laid aside all ornaments, and went in mean clothing, in order that he might give all he could spare to the poor. When a stranger enquired for his residence, it was usual

to describe it by saying, "Go in that direction, and where you see a number of poor people assembled, there dwells Eligius." When he heard that vessels were arrived full of slaves for sale, captives of Roman, Gallic, British, and Moorish descent, but particularly Saxons, who were driven like so many cattle, he hastened to the spot and sometimes ransomed a hundred. When money failed him, he gave up not only all his ornaments but also necessary articles of clothing, and even stinted himself in his daily food. He went at once with them to the king, procured letters of manumission for them, and gave them the choice, whether they would return free to their native country, in which case he would furnish them with money for travelling, or remain with him not as slaves but as free brethren. Sometimes it happened that Eligius had in this manner given everything away. He sat down at table with the poor, who commonly were his guests. When his servants ridiculed or expressed their sympathy, he said, "How unbelieving are ye! Will He who fed Elijah and John in the wilderness, refuse his blessing to us in such society? I depend upon my Creator, that although we do not deserve it, yet these poor people will not leave the room till they have been refreshed by his gifts." Scarcely had he uttered these words, when persons knocked at the door, bringing bread and other provisions which the king or

some wealthy individual, or some pious man who knew his unbounded hospitality, had sent.

Eligius was zealous for the spread of religious knowledge. On his journeys he delivered edifying discourses to the people. . . .

The universal veneration which his pious conduct had gained for him, and the confidence which was placed in his Christian zeal, led to his election to the episcopal office in the year 641, when a vacancy occurred which required to be filled up by a self-sacrificing, laborious man. It was the large district of Vermondes, Tournay, and Noyon, in and adjoining which dwelt partly people that were still heathens, whom no preacher of the Gospel had yet visited, partly those who knew nothing of vital Christianity, and who had received nothing more than the mere semblance of Christianity. . . At the peril of his life, and under many indignities which were heaped upon him, he laboured among fierce pagans and nominal Christians, who were unwilling to renounce their heathenish pleasures and superstitions. By his Christian love and gentleness, he soon gained the victory over the rage and hatred of the Pagans, but was placed in antagonism to the increasing power of the mighty ones of the land, who wished to combine Pagan indulgences and superstitions with a nominal Christianity. Eligius had reached his seventieth year, in constant unwearied activity when he peacefully found death approaching.

In his last moments he assembled his pupils round his bed, and while they wept, he said, "Live in peace and let me go to rest." He then prayed aloud, "O Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, as Thou hast said. Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight no flesh living can be justified. Remember me, O Thou who art alone without sin. Christ, Saviour of the world! deliver me from this body of death, and receive me to Thy heavenly kingdom. Thou hast always been my protector; into Thy hands I commend my spirit. I know that I do not deserve to behold Thy face. Yet Thou knowest that my hope has always been placed in Thy mercy, and that I firmly abide in Thy faith, and with my last breath confess Thy name. Receive me, therefore of Thy great mercy, and let not my hope be brought to shame. Let Thy gracious hand protect me, and lead me to the place of rest, the final habitation which Thou hast prepared for Thy servants, and for those who fear Thee." Having uttered this prayer he departed.

[The foregoing biographies have been taken from *Neander's Memorials of Christian Life in the Early and Middle Ages*.]

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